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BIRDS FROM FLORES. LESSER SUNDA ISLANDS

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During recent years the Museum of Comparative Zoology has received from the Rev. J. A. J. Verheijen, S.V.D., several collections of birds from the western part of Flores Island. Without using a gun, Father Verheijen and his local assistants have secured representatives of 70 species. Eleven of these have not been previously recorded from the island and several others are of taxonomic importance. It is the purpose of this paper to note briefly these more interesting species.

NYCTICORAX CALEDONICUS subsp.

A bird in partial adult plumage was snared at Tjantjar, Rahong, on 19 May 1957. Until 1940, when an example of *N. caledonicus* was found paired with one of *N. nycticorax* in western Java (Hoogerwerf, 1952), this night-heron was not known west of Timor. This is the only record from Flores.

DENDROCYGNA JAVANICA

A wing has been preserved of a bird collected in 1956. Sumbawa is the farthest east it had been recorded previously.

ELANUS CAERULEUS subsp.

The easternmost localities for this hawk were Sumba and Celebes. A nestling, just about to fledge, was taken near Ruteng, at about 1000 meters, in July, 1957.

RALLUS PECTORALIS EXSUL

Three birds, the first known since the type specimen was secured, were collected in 1958 and 1959. One is an adult; unfortunately it was not sexed. The other two are juvenals which

have little barring on the ventrum, lack the rufescent head, and have no bright olive margins to the feathers of the back.

I have examined two specimens of *Rallus mirificus* Parkes and Amadon (1959) from Luzon, Philippine Islands, and believe that this form is a race of *R. pectoralis*. From Australia through New Guinea to Flores, *R. pectoralis* exhibits a fairly orderly cline of decreasing dorsal streaking, darkening head color, and shortening of the dorsal feathers. The characters of *mirificus* are the culmination of these trends and are those one might have predicted at the end of a cline extending from Australia to the Philippines. The differences between the Philippine bird and the Australian races are marked, but the subspecies from Flores is almost perfectly intermediate. Additional races may well be discovered between Luzon and Flores, showing that the cline is less disjunctive than it now appears. Support for this prediction may be found in the knowledge that *R. p. mirificus* remained unknown until only four years ago, in spite of its presence within 50 miles of Manila, long a center of ornithological research.

PORZANA PUSILLA PUSILLA

Three specimens were collected: two at Tjara in late April and mid-May, 1957, and one at Wangjung in late April, 1956. One is a male, and two were not sexed, but on plumage characters these seem to be a male and a female. The species apparently breeds on Flores, although there are no prior records of its presence.

It may be that these specimens represent an undescribed race. However, our birds are too poorly preserved and few in number to be certain that the apparent racial characters are real. The specimens are close to nominate *pusilla* but are somewhat darker dorsally, with more extensive black centers to the feathers, particularly on the tail, and have heavier, but not longer, bills. The pale area on the chin and upper throat of the males seems whiter and more sharply demarcated than in the nominate form. The bills of two birds are black with very narrow yellowish markings on the anterior edges of both the maxilla and mandible. The third specimen is similar but also has a small pale area near the tip of the mandible. In a series of 26 specimens of *P. p. pusilla* one has a bill similarly colored to the third Flores bird, and none of the series resembles the other two birds.

The dried legs of the Flores specimens are considerably darker than any of *P. p. pusilla*.

The three birds from Flores are easily distinguished from *mayri* of New Guinea and from *palustris* of Australia by their larger size (wing 84-86 mm.). I have not seen an example of *mira*, from East Borneo, but the original description (Riley, 1938) notes that the bill is olive-yellow and bronze, which seems vastly different from the Flores birds.

POLIOLIMNAS CINEREUS CINEREUS

This widespread rail is new for Flores.

GALLICREX CINEREA

A specimen was collected at Tjantjar on 14 May 1957. The species apparently has not been found before on the Malay Archipelago east of Java, where it seems to be a winter visitor (Kuroda, 1936). Its presence on Flores in mid-May suggests that it may breed there but, unfortunately, the gonads of our specimen were not examined.

GALLINULA CHLOROPUS ORIENTALIS

Nine specimens were collected, one of which contained an egg in mid-May. No prior records from Flores exist.

ROSTRATULA BENGHALENSIS BENGHALENSIS

This is another bird not reported from the island before and which represents an eastward range extension. A specimen collected in July was breeding.

GALLINAGO STENURA

Three specimens establish this snipe as a winter visitor on Flores.

GALLINAGO MEGALA

A long series, collected over several winters, represents a new record for the island.

OTUS (BAKKAMOENA) SILVICOLA

This endemic owl is probably a giant geographical representative of *O. bakkamoena*. It is similar to *O. b. semitorques* of Japan, but it is considerably larger and lacks the buff crescent on the upper back. This was noted by Hartert (1897), who also

remarked on the similarity of *silvicola* to *O. b. whiteheadi* of Luzon. The Philippine form has a white hindneck and is darker below than *silvicola*, but in size more nearly approaches the Flores bird than any other race of *O. bakkamoena*. Compared to the geographically closer Javan and Bornean populations, *silvicola* is markedly larger. This is suggestive of the situation in the Philippines, where *whiteheadi* is considerably larger than any nearby races.

TYTO CAPENSIS subsp.

A specimen obtained in March, 1956, is the first record of the species from the Sunda Islands, thus confirming Hartert's suggestion (1929) that it might some day be found there.

I am following Amadon and Jewett (1946) in treating *longimembris* and *capensis* as conspecific.

In view of the variability of the species and the paucity of material, particularly from the southwest Pacific, I am reluctant to assign this specimen to any race. Amadon (1959) tentatively placed two individuals from Celebes and Kalidupa with *T. c. walleri* (type locality Queensland); the Flores bird may also belong here.

CORACINA DOHERTYI

An immature bird was collected in early March. Rensch (1931) recorded several specimens from the island, but Flores was inadvertently omitted from the range of the species as given in Volume 9 of the "Check-list of Birds of the World" (Mayr and Greenway, 1960).

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